

PRESS FREEDOM IN EAST AFRICA: CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE



**For World Press
Freedom Day,
May 2022**



OUTLINE

1. Support for Media Freedom among citizens of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda
2. How are digital sources changing the media landscape?
3. Who do citizens trust most to provide them with information?
4. What role does the media play at critical moments – elections, pandemics, etc?
5. What role does the media have in democratic strengthening?



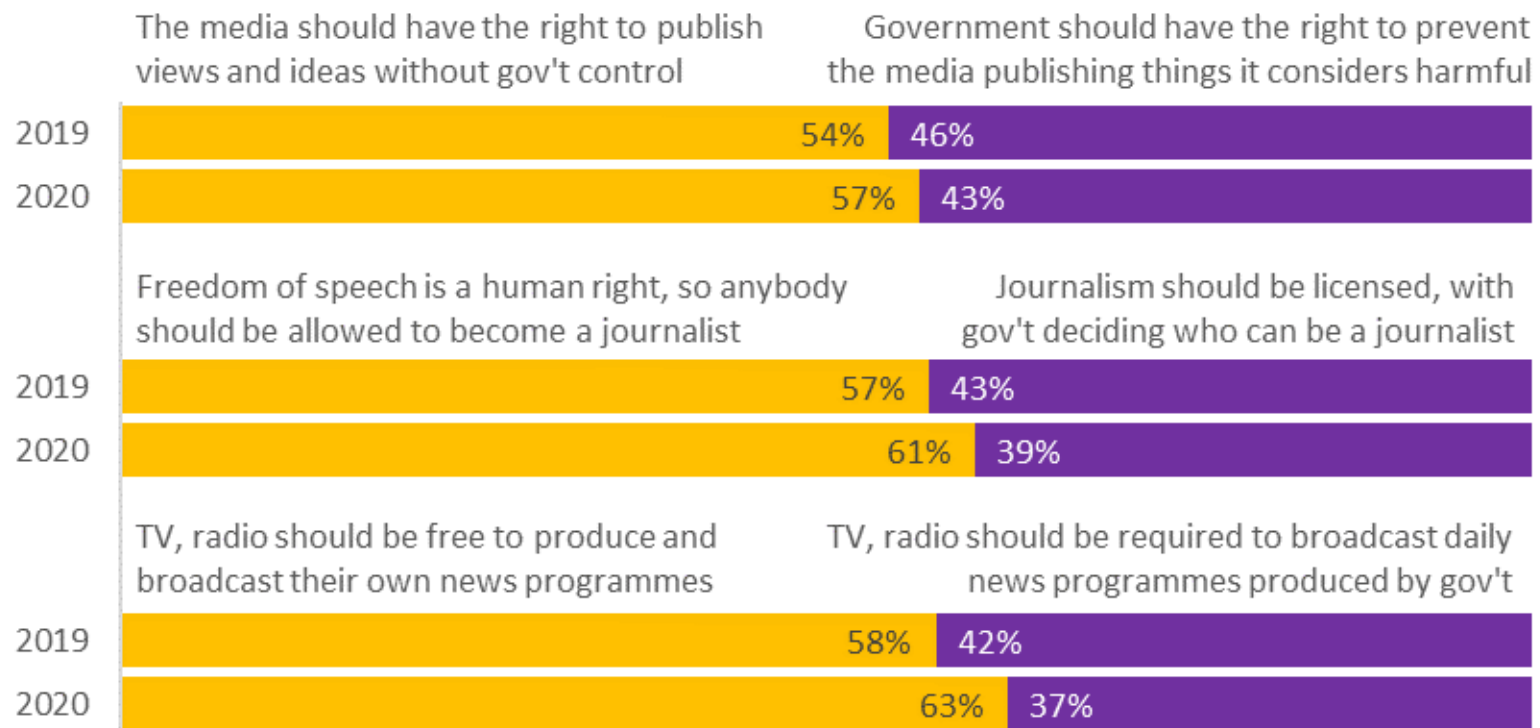
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SUPPORT FOR MEDIA FREEDOM



In Uganda, most citizens say the media should have freedom to work without government interference

Uganda: From each pair of statements, which do you agree with more?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, 2019-2020



Similarly, in Tanzania, most support media freedom and limits on government powers to intervene

Tanzania: From each pair of statements, which do you agree with more?

Criticism of leaders is a good thing, it helps stop them from making big mistakes

Criticism of leaders is a bad thing, it undermines respect and unity

81% 19%

If a newspaper prints something factually incorrect, they should apologize and publish a correction

If a newspaper prints something factually incorrect, the newspaper should be shut down or fined

62% 38%

If the gov't wants to punish a newspaper for reporting something deemed to be offensive, gov't should justify their decision in court

If a newspaper reports something the gov't deems offensive, gov't should close / punish them without justifying their decision in court

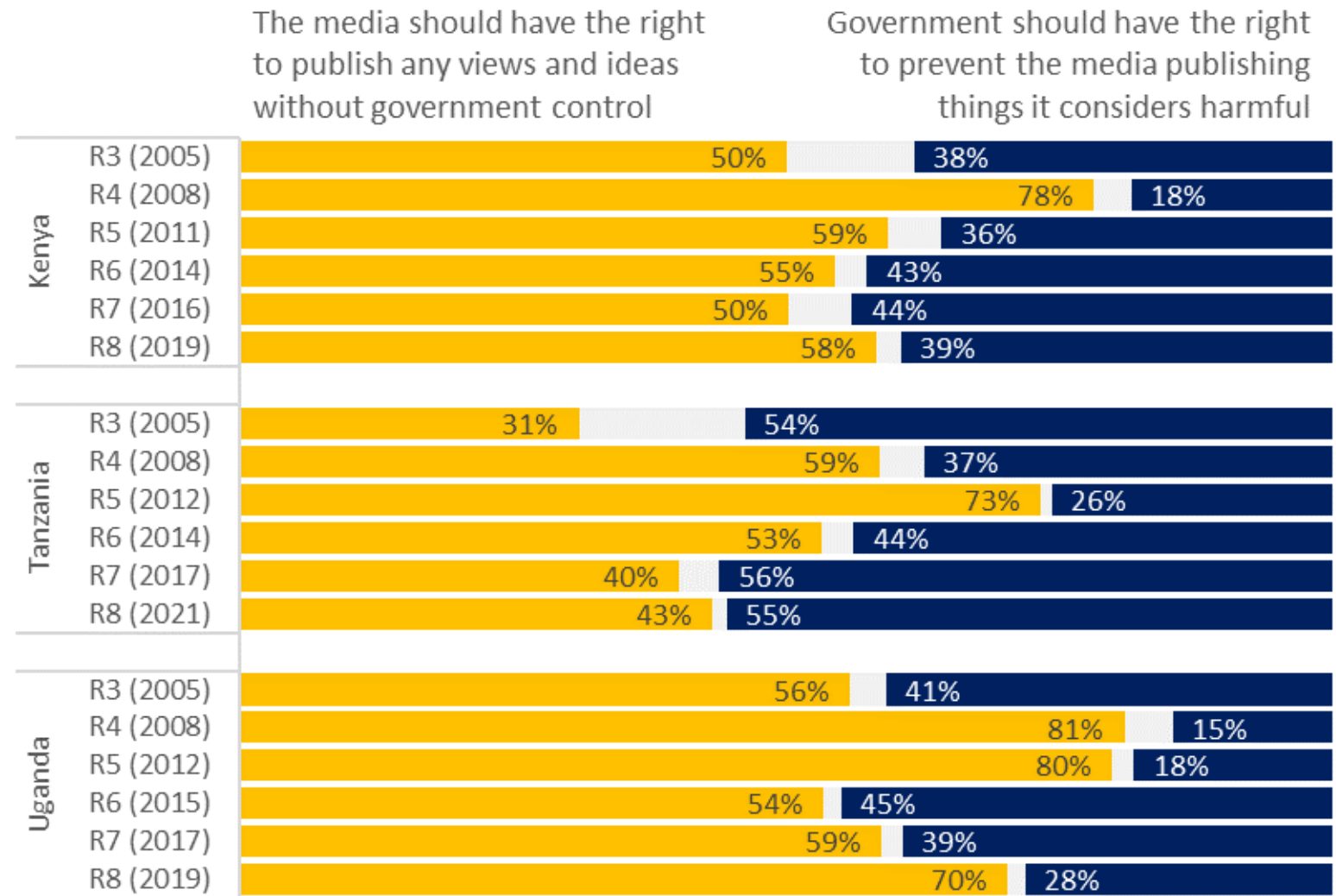
54% 46%

Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Survey, 2017



Overall
support for
media
freedom in
East Africa
has *risen and
fallen* over
recent years

Which statement do you agree with more?

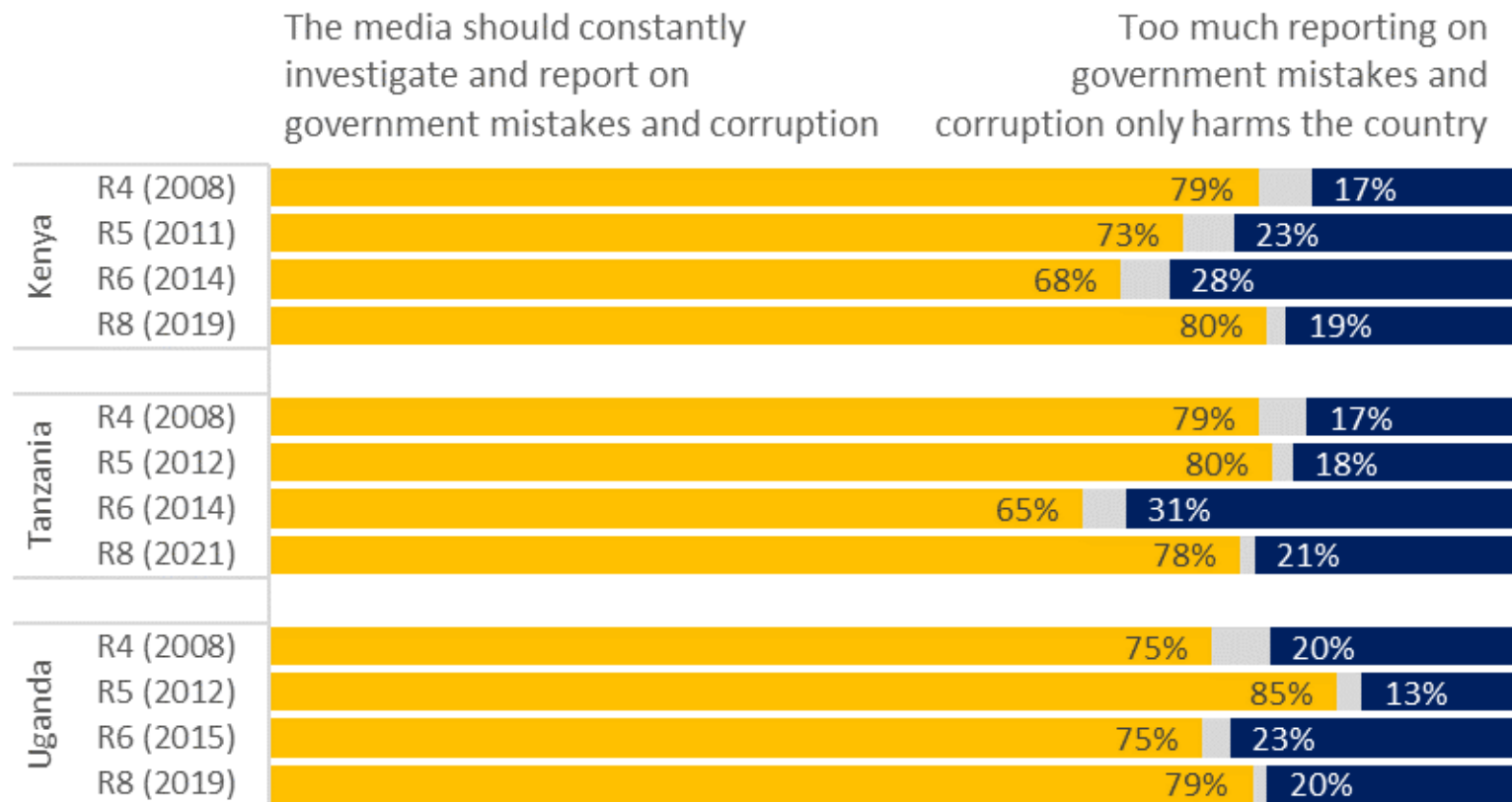


Source: Afrobarometer Public Opinion Surveys, 2005-2021



But citizens believe strongly that media reporting on government mistakes and corruption is *a good thing*

Which statement do you agree with more?

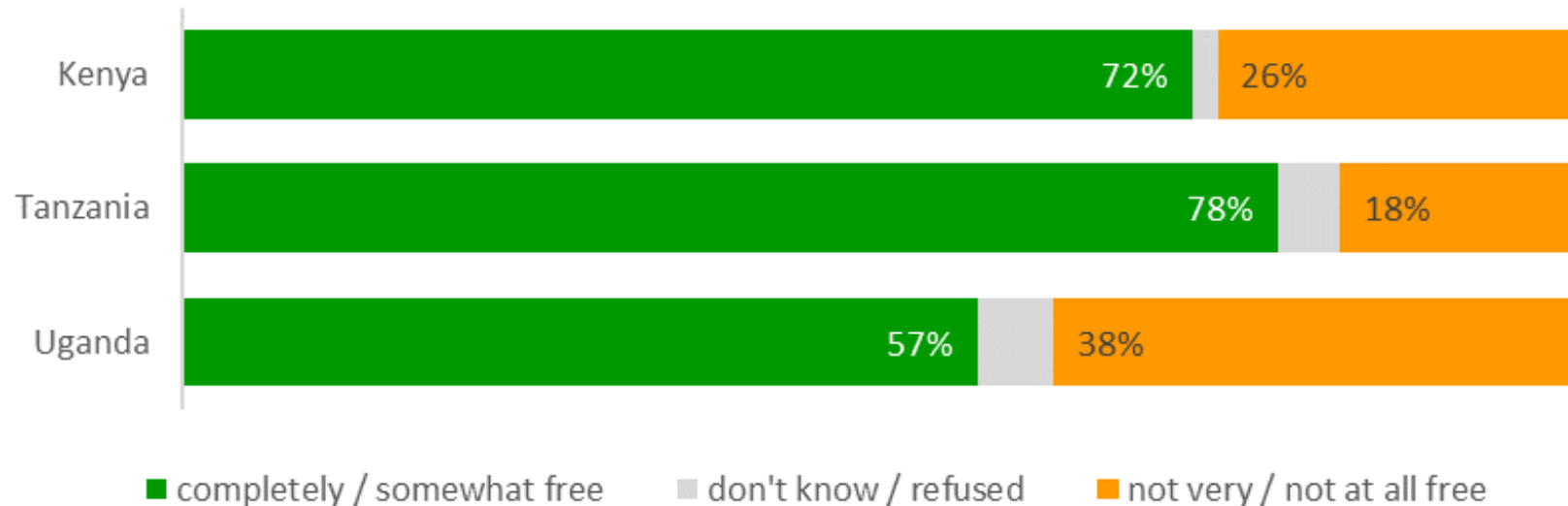


Source: Afrobarometer Public Opinion Surveys, 2005-2021



Citizens also believe the media *is currently free* to report and comment on the news

In your view, how free is the media in this country to report and comment on the news without government interference?



Source: Afrobarometer Public Opinion Surveys, 2019-2021





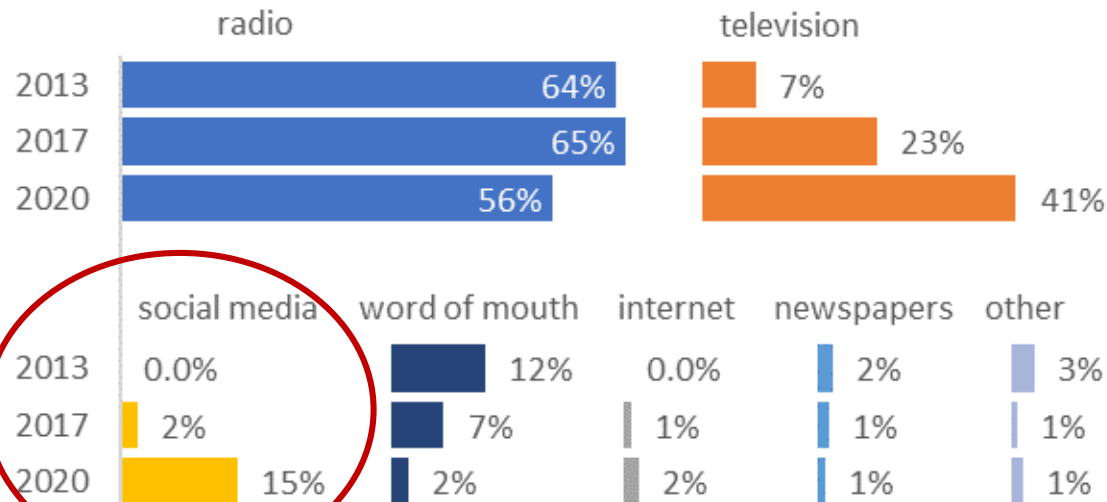
IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA



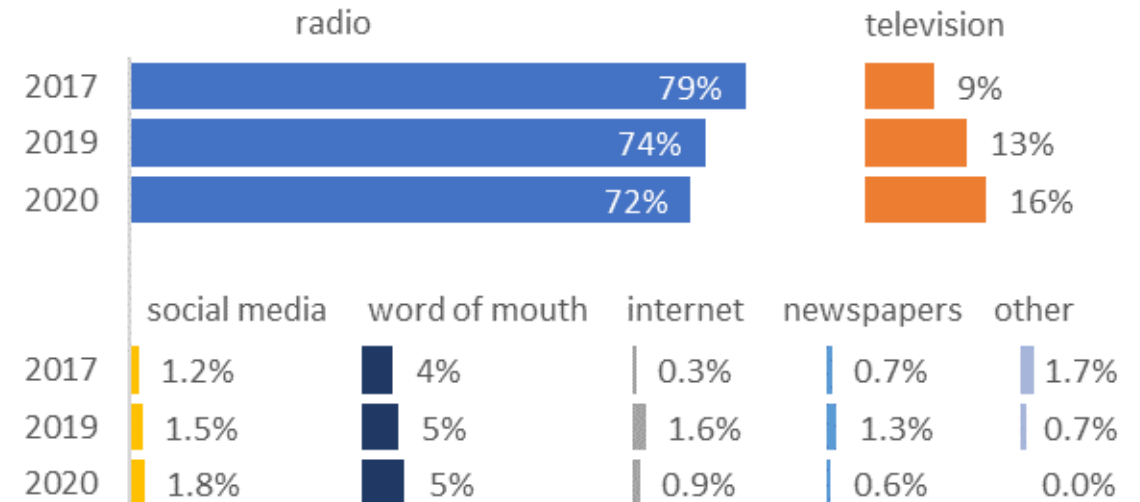
Radio is still citizens' main source of information, but tv and social media are growing (especially in Tz)

Which media is your main source of information?

Tanzania



Uganda



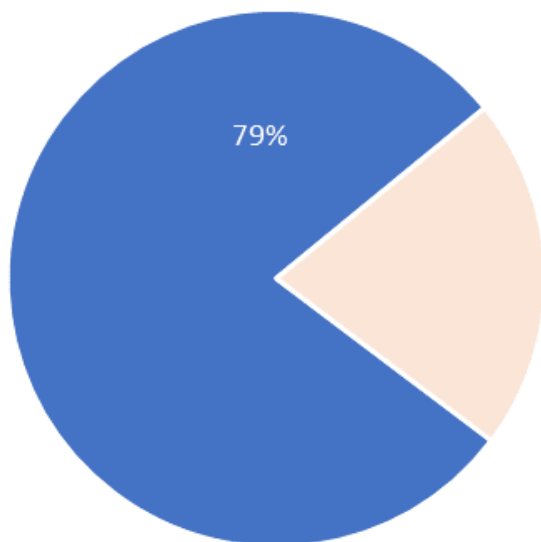
Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, 2013-2020



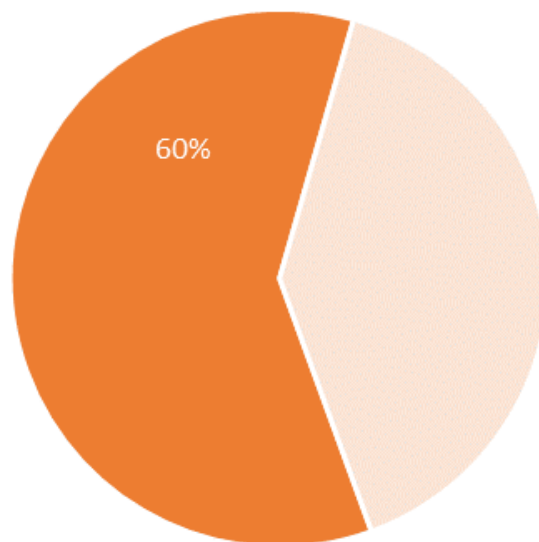
Radio and TV are also the dominant sources of information in Kenya

Kenya: % who did the following at least once in the previous week:

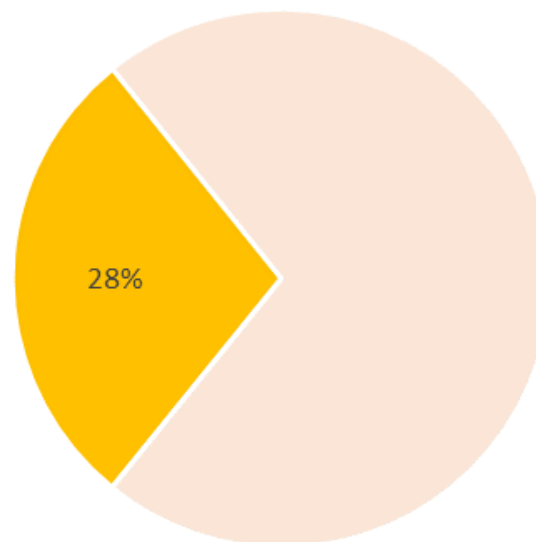
Listened to the radio



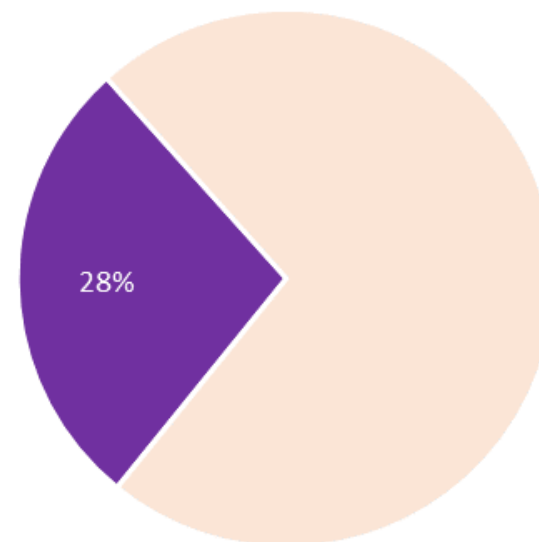
Watched TV



Used the Internet



Read a newspaper

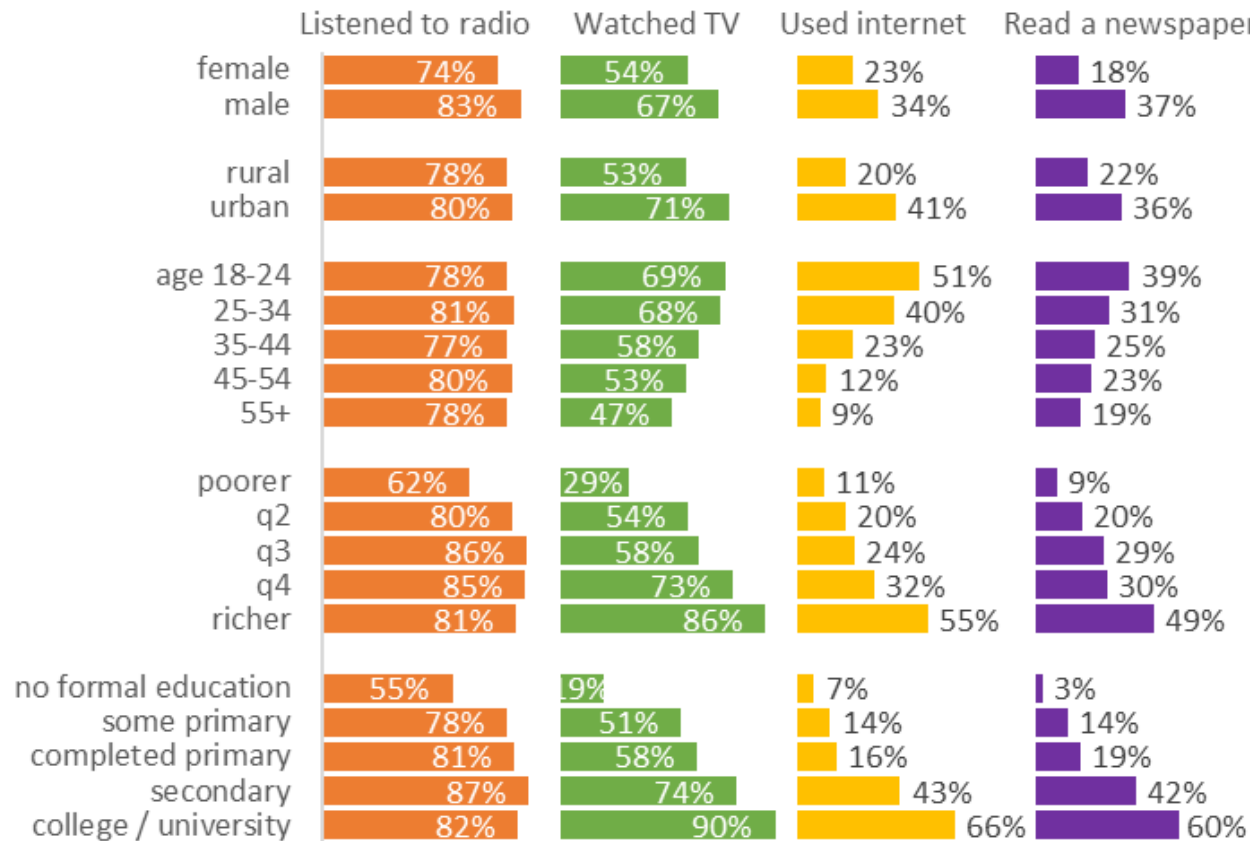


Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Survey, 2018

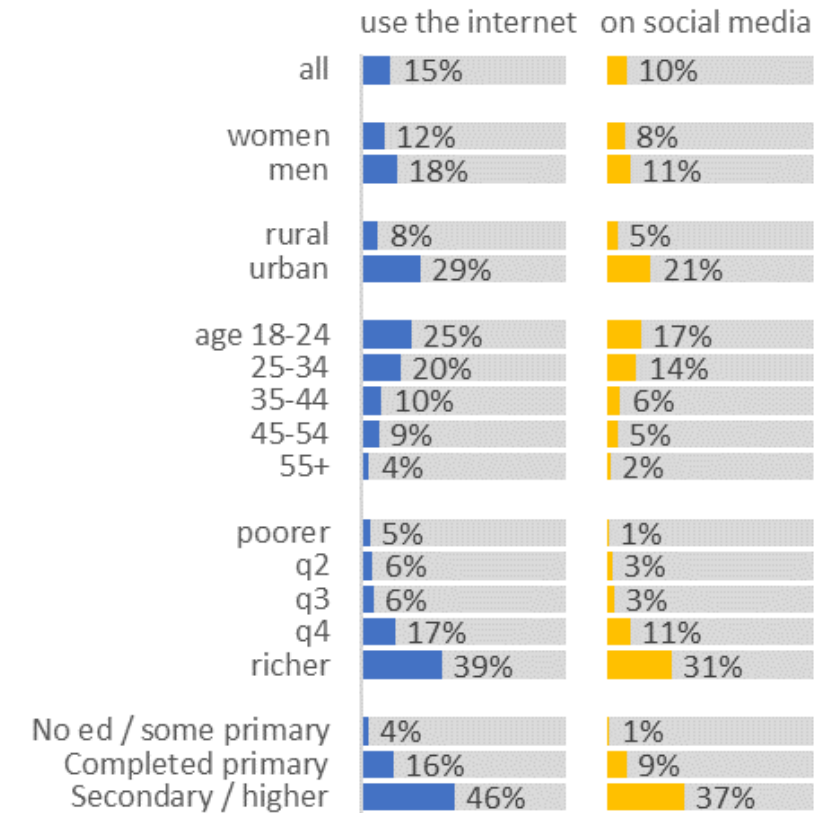


Radio is used by all, but TV, internet, social media are dominated by the young, wealthy, urban and educated

Kenya: % who did the following at least once in the previous week:



Uganda: Do you use the internet / are you a member of social networking site?

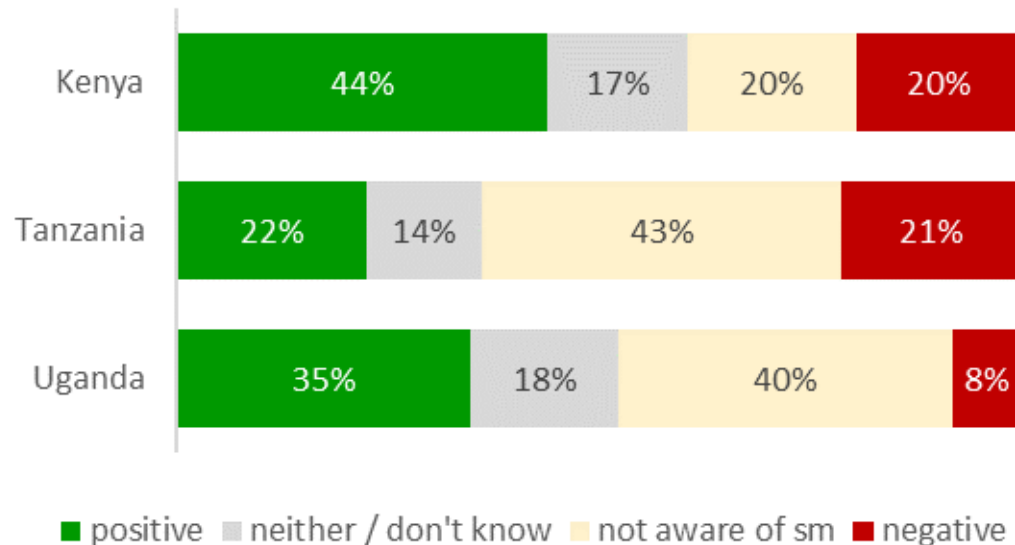


Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, Kenya 2018 and Uganda 2021

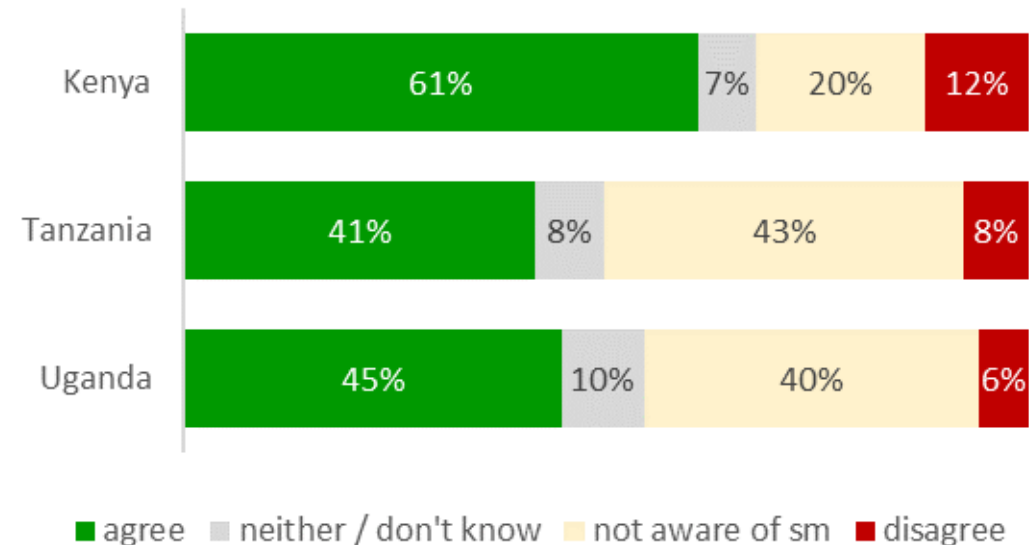


Citizens see social media overall as a *good thing* that helps people have *more impact on politics*

Overall, do you think that the effects of social media on society are mostly positive or negative?

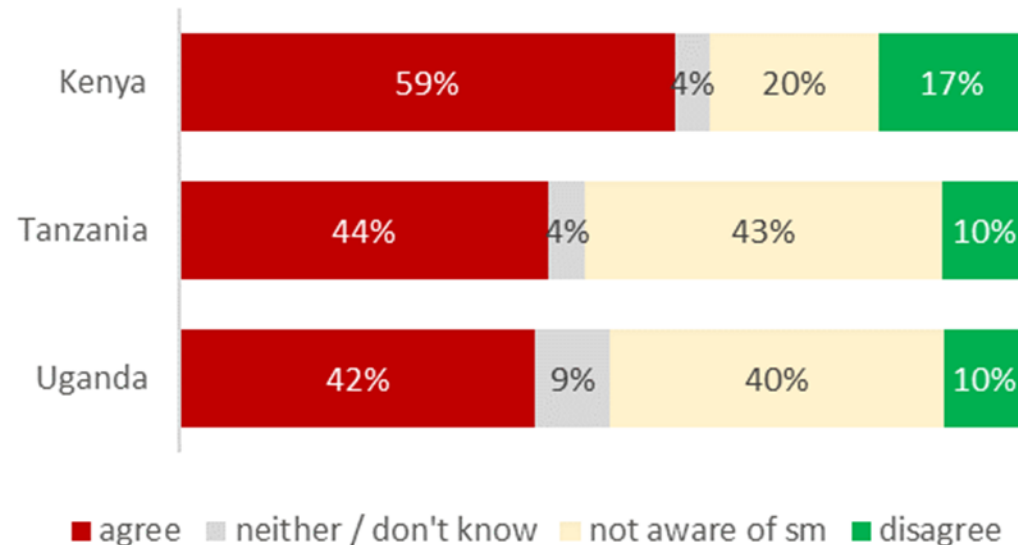


Do you agree or disagree: Social media helps people have more impact on political processes?

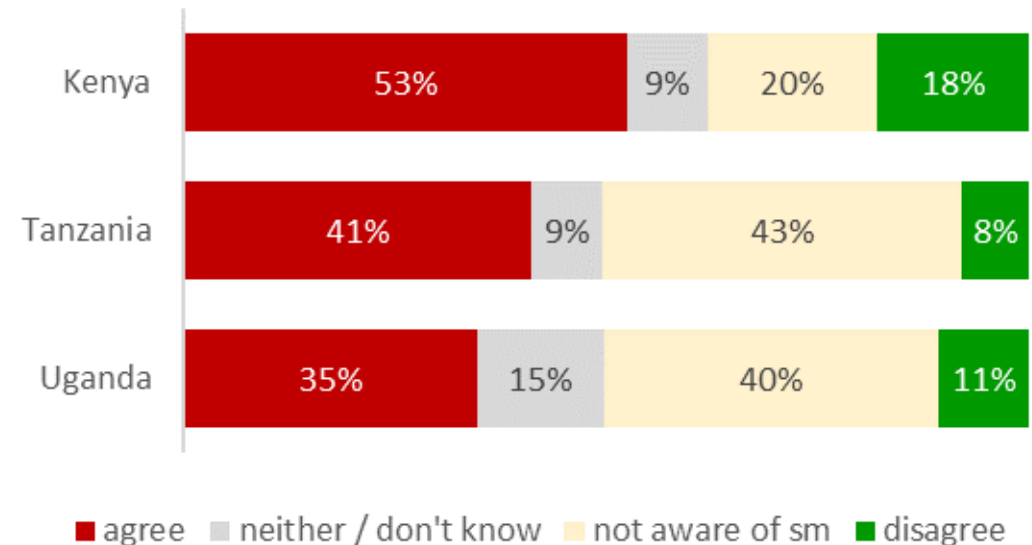


However, citizens also have concerns about the effect of social media on *fake news* and *intolerance*

Do you agree or disagree: Social media makes people more likely to believe false news?

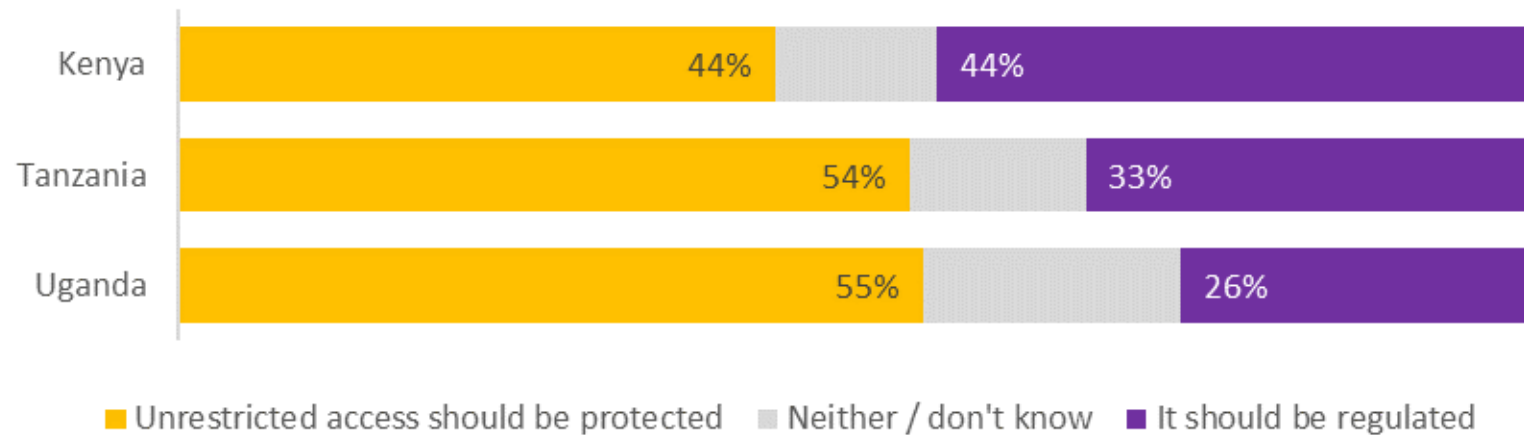


Agree or disagree: Social media makes people more intolerant of those with different political opinions?



Most citizens think unrestricted access to the internet and social media should be protected, less so in Kenya

Should unrestricted access to the internet and social media be protected, or should this be regulated?



Source: Afrobarometer Public Opinion Surveys, 2019-2021



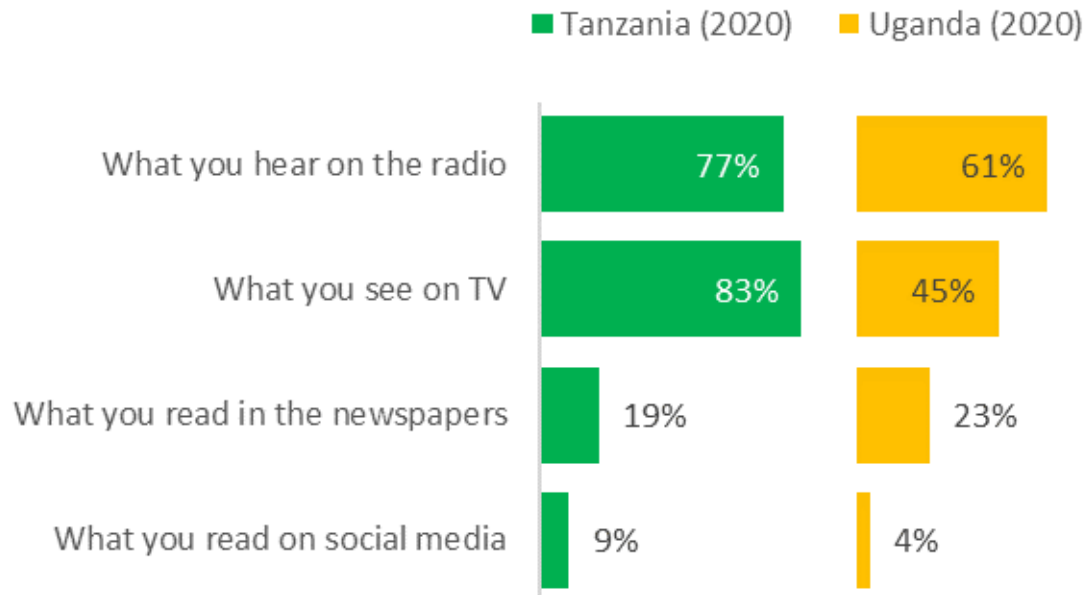


TRUST IN THE MEDIA

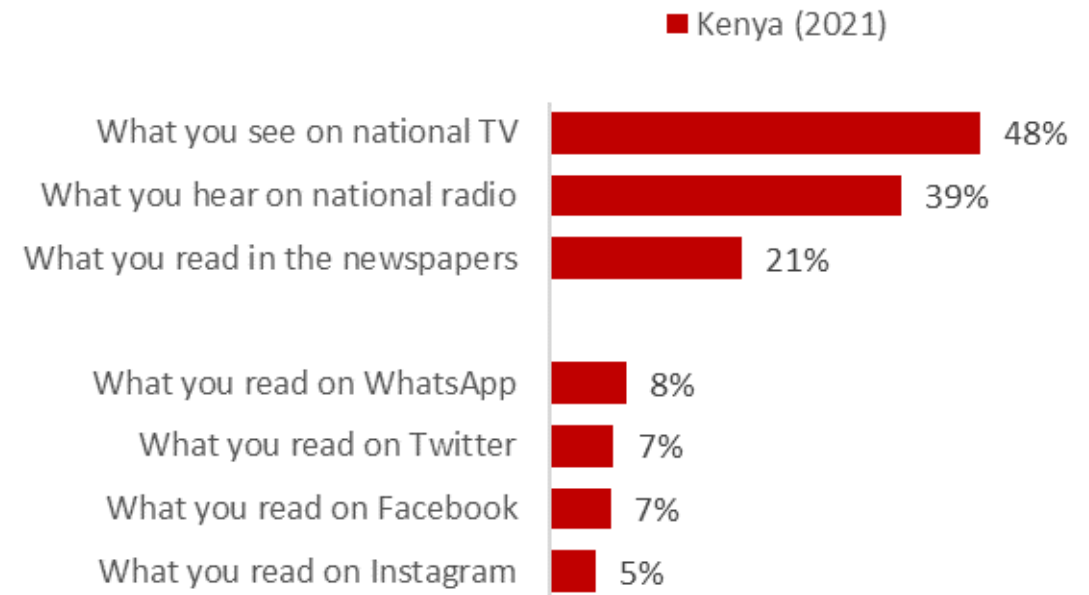


Trust is much higher in information from radio and TV than from social media

% who trust "completely" information from the following sources:

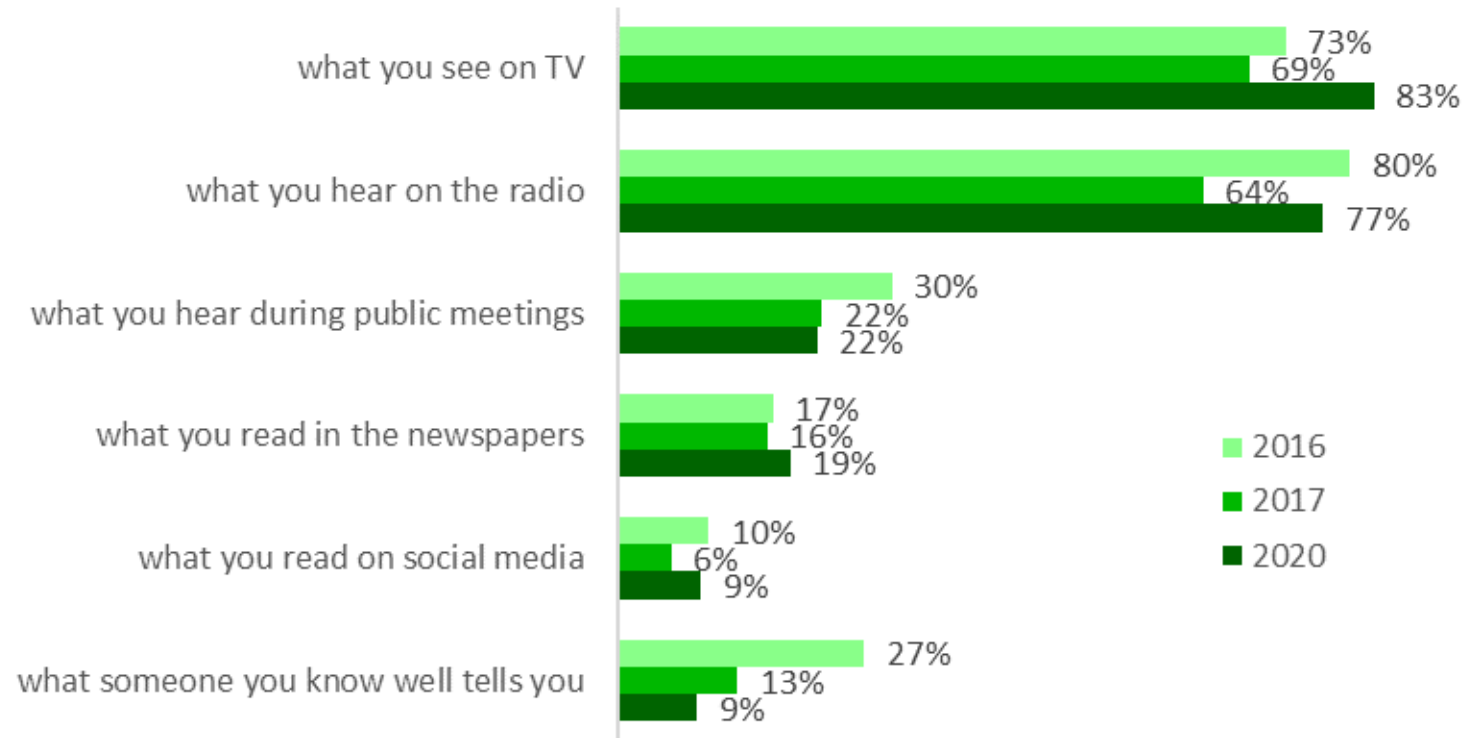


% who trust "very much" information from the following sources:



TV and radio have consistent been the most trusted across recent years, while trust in people has fallen

Tanzania: % who trust "completely"
information from the following sources:



Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, 2016-2020



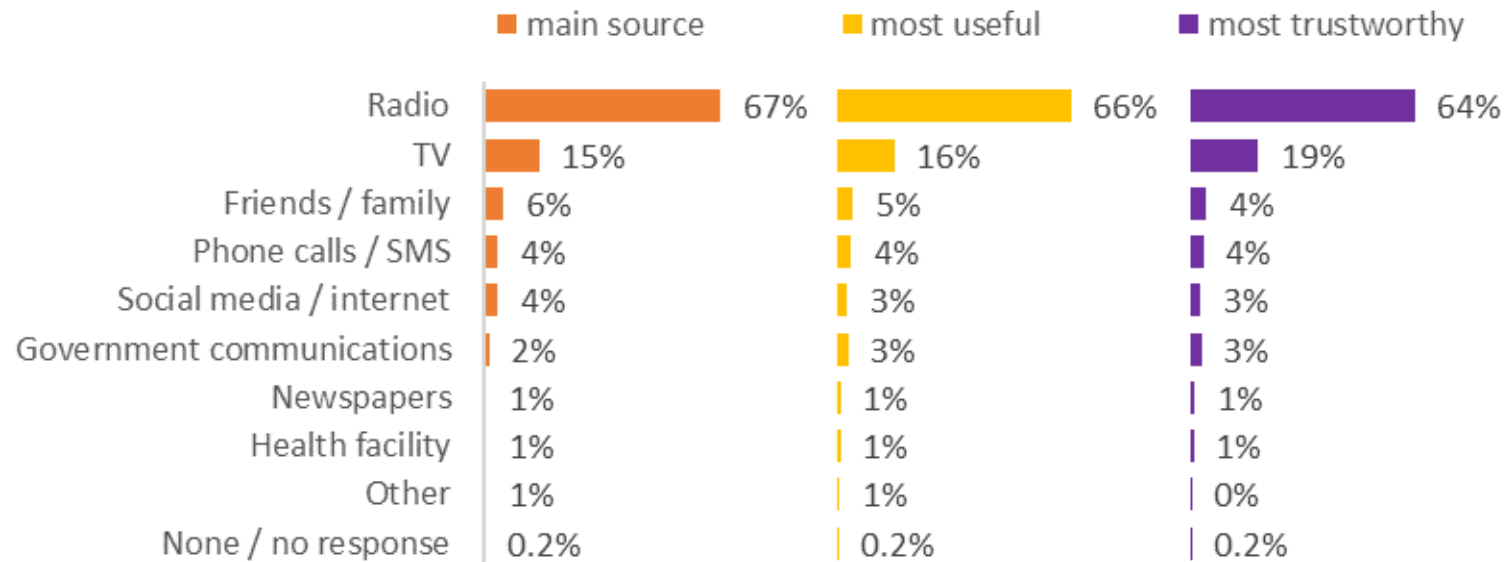


THE MEDIA AT KEY MOMENTS



In Uganda, when the Coronavirus pandemic struck, people looked mainly to TV and radio for information

Uganda: What has been your main source of information about Covid-19? Which was the most useful / most trustworthy?

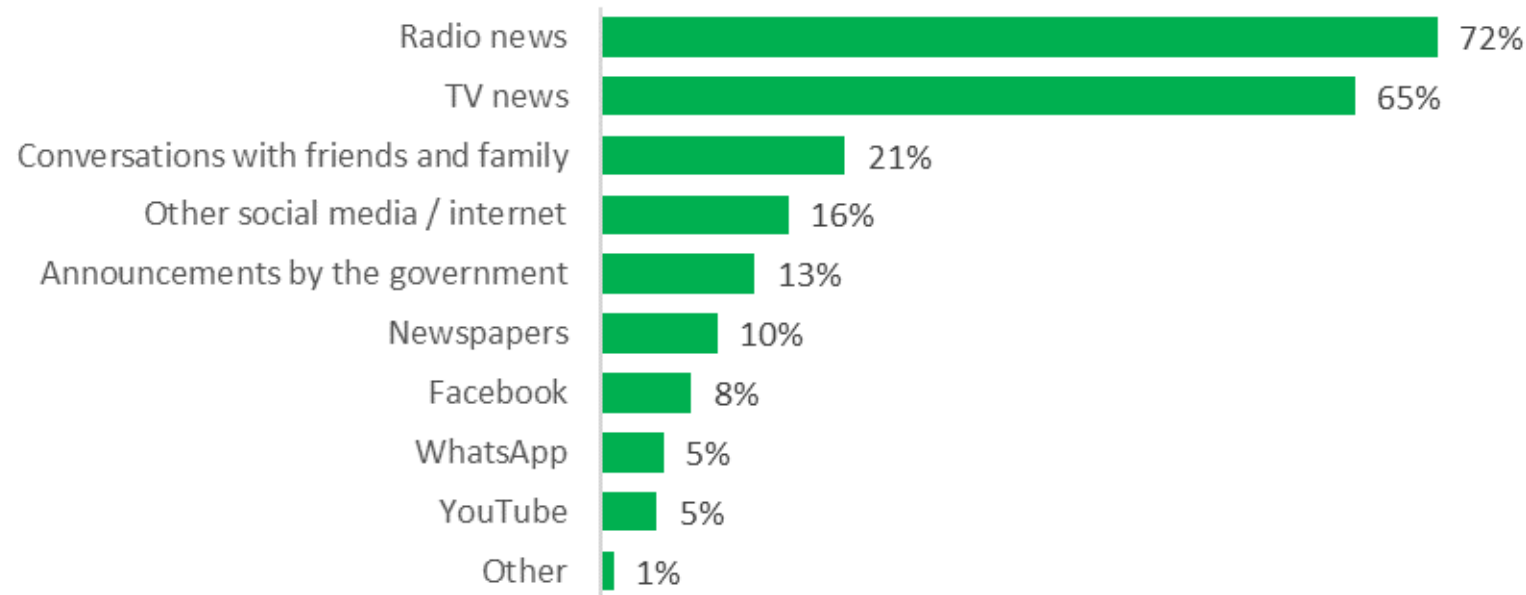


Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, 2020



Similarly, in Tanzania, citizens seek information about Covid-19 vaccines mainly from radio and TV news

Tanzania: From which of the following sources have you heard about vaccines against Covid-19?

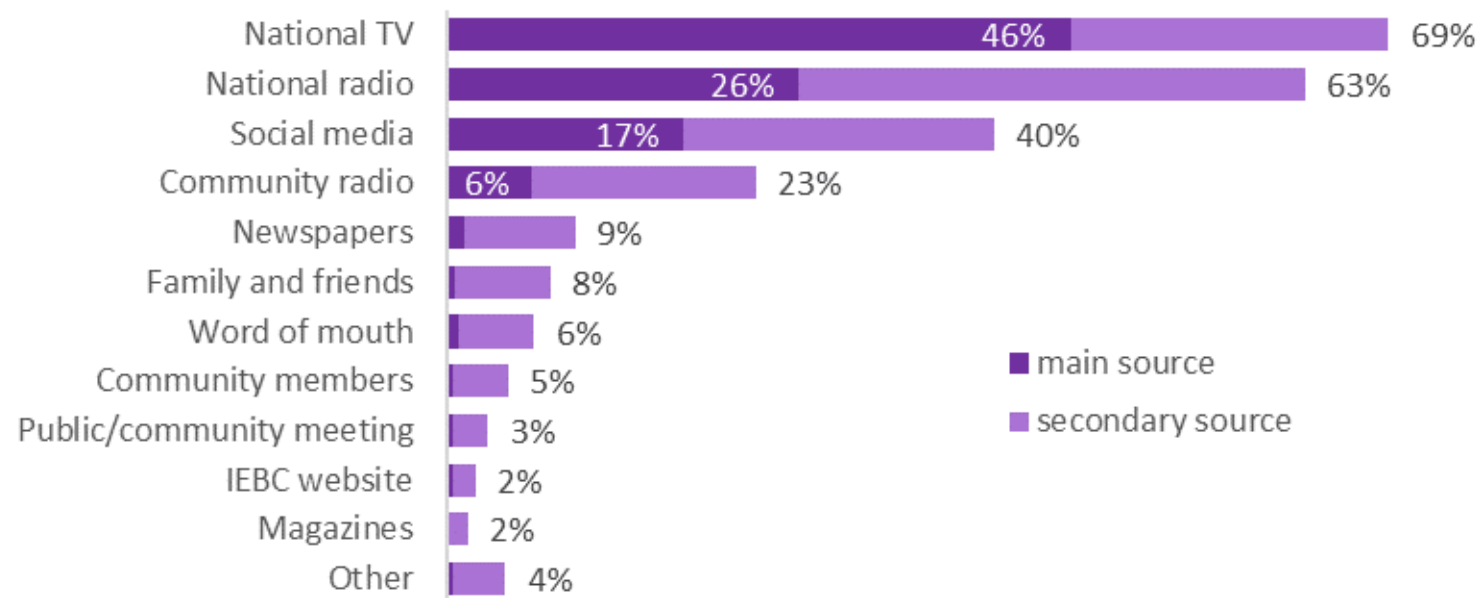


Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, 2016-2020



And in Kenya, citizens still primarily use turn to TV and radio for news on election-related matters

Kenya: Which of the following have been your sources of information/news over the last four weeks on election matters?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, 2021-22



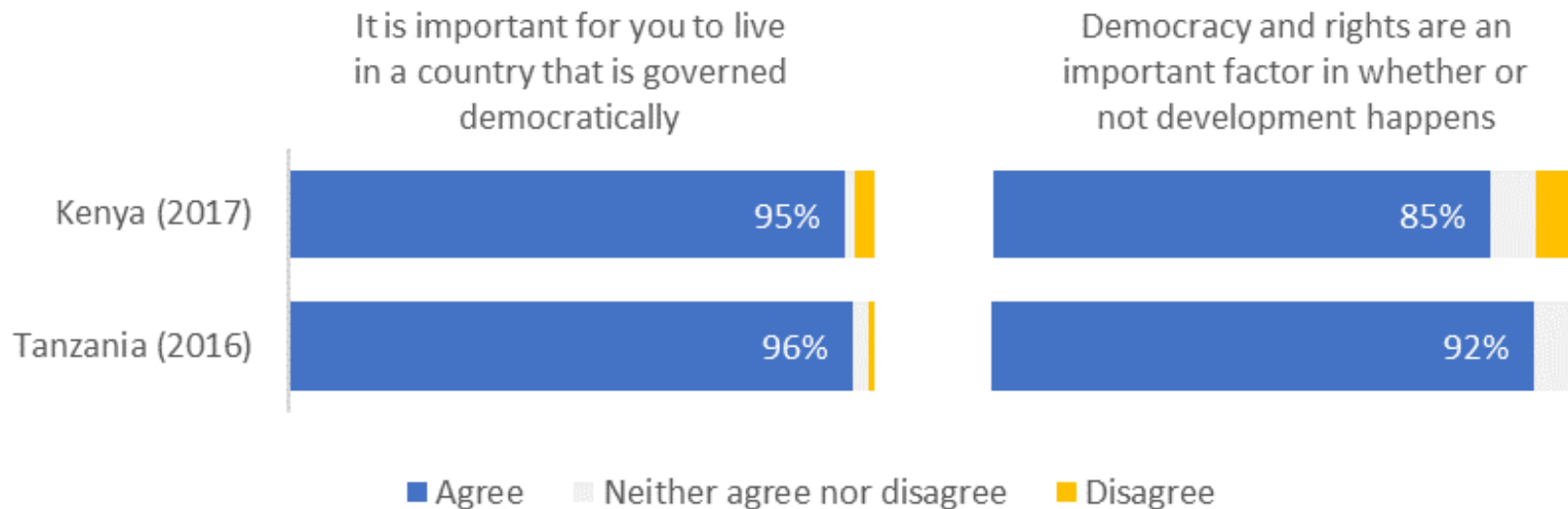


MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY



In Kenya and Tanzania, almost all say it is important to live in a country that is governed democratically

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, 2016 (Tz) and 2017 (Ke)



Independent media, freedom of expression and access to info are all seen as vital to democracy

% who say the following are "very important" as characteristics of democracy:

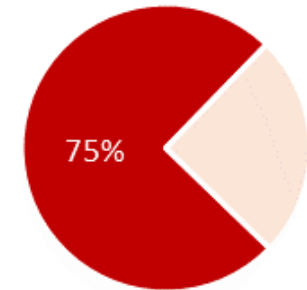
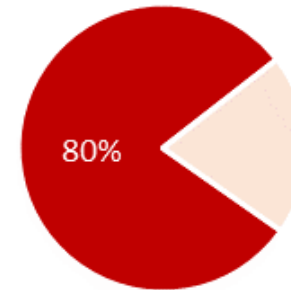
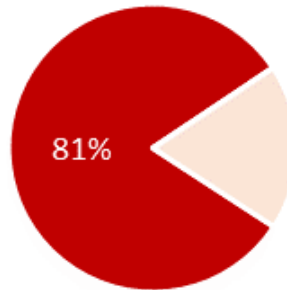
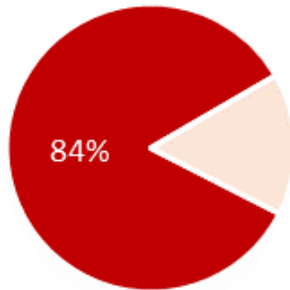
Citizens are free to criticise the govt when they think it has done wrong

Strong, independent institutions monitor the govt to ensure it is doing its job

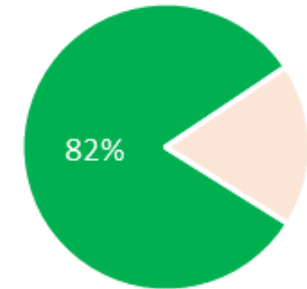
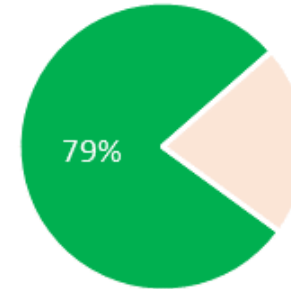
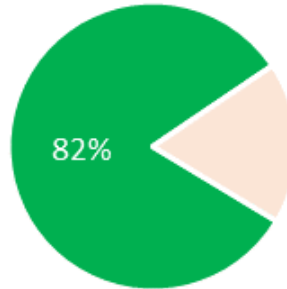
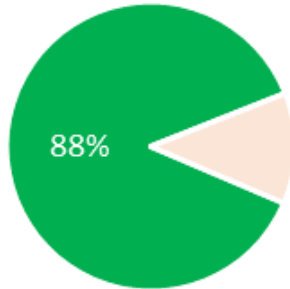
Info about what the govt is doing, including the budget, is easily available to citizens

The media is able to operate independently

Kenya (2017)



Tanzania (2016)



Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Panel Surveys, 2016 (Tz) and 2017 (Ke)





ASANTENI



www.twaweza.org

